

be a mere appanage of the Spanish crown. Only the accident of birth had destined Philip to rule over such a free-spirited people. If he could not rule them in accordance with their interests and their aspirations, he had no real right to rule them at all. The sooner he gave up the task for which he was radically unfit, the better for him and for them. Such at least is the dictum of common-sense.

The career and character of William of Orange have been the object of bitter reproach as well as of enthusiastic laudation. The extreme contentions of partisans apart, there are some features of both that must commend themselves to every impartial mind. It is evident that the foundation of the Dutch Republic was largely due to his political ability and force of character. All through the grim conflict he is the soul of the resistance to the policy of coercion. In desperate situations it is his indomitable courage, his inexhaustible resource in expedients, that saves the tempest-tossed ship, pilots it past the rocks. His career was a continual storm. He had not only the Spaniards to fight and circumvent, but traitors, enemies, opponents in his own camp to thwart. The personality of the man, his courage, his devotion, his strength of will, his extraordinary grasp of detail and expedient, his faith in a higher power as the moulder of human affairs, his wariness, his astuteness, were worth more to these struggling provinces than the alliance of England, France, and Germany, which he strove in vain to engineer against Spain, would have been. It is, of course, impossible to vindicate his every action on principles of abstract justice. In every great political movement where two opposing policies clash in mortal strife, the leader cannot always choose his expedients, cannot always square his calculations and combinations with the principles of moral philosophy. To see in such a career the consistency of the unalloyed Christian would be to falsify history, reckon without human nature, misinterpret the situation. The astute politician who engineers such a movement cannot afford to be an unalloyed Christian, without being guilty of a considerable amount of self-deception and sophistry. He cannot take the straight road. It is his business to set traps for his enemy, to outwit, discomfit him at all hazards. At the same time we should not forget that this was no mere party